



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A PROCLAMATION

NEUROMYELITIS OPTICA SPECTRUM DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH

- WHEREAS: Neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder (NMO) is a rare, life-threatening autoimmune disease of the central nervous system that may affect the optic nerves, spinal cord, or brain; and
- WHEREAS: Individuals with NMO commonly develop optic neuritis, which causes pain in the eyes, as well as vision loss. NMO is also associated with transverse myelitis, which may lead to weakness, numbness, paralysis of the arms and legs, sensory disturbances, and loss of intestinal control; and
- WHEREAS: As NMO progresses, the cells and antibodies of the immune system attack and destroy myelin cells throughout the optic nerves and spinal cord. NMO was previously considered a severe variant of multiple sclerosis (MS), though recent discoveries have concluded NMO is a separate disease due to the severity of its attacks and its tendency to strike the optic nerves and spinal cord at its earlier stages; and
- WHEREAS: An antibody known as NMO-Immunoglobulin G (NMO-IgG) is present in approximately 70 percent of those with NMO, though it is not found in individuals diagnosed with MS or other similar conditions. Today, the NMO-IgG test can be ordered by any primary care physician; and
- WHEREAS: Because NMO is frequently mistaken for MS or other autoimmune conditions, heightened public awareness is critical to ensure early detection and accurate treatment for those suffering from the disease; and
- WHEREAS: Finding a cure for NMO would have wide-ranging benefits, including offering new solutions for fighting other autoimmune diseases including MS, Lupus, and Sjögren's syndrome; and
- WHEREAS: National, state, and local organizations are striving to uncover methods to better treat and manage the symptoms of NMO and ensure those affected by NMO maintain an adequate quality of life; and
- WHEREAS: During Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month, the Guthy-Jackson Charitable Foundation, along with patients, caregivers, scientists, clinicians, and industry and regulatory communities across the state, work together to increase awareness of this autoimmune disease and raise funds for continued research efforts; now
- THEREFORE: I, NATHAN DEAL, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim March 2018 as NEUROMYELITIS OPTICA SPECTRUM DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH in Georgia.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 22nd day of February in the year of our Lord two thousand eighteen.



Nathan Deal
GOVERNOR

ATTEST

Chris W. Riley
CHIEF OF STAFF